FORM B – BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Assessor's Number	USGS Quad	Area(s)	Form Number
18-41A	ORLEANS		EAS.17

Town/City: Town of Eastham

Place: *(neighborhood or village)*: South Eastham

Address: 1220 State Highway

Historic Name: Freeman & Martha Knowles House

Uses: Present: single-family residence

Original: single-family residence

Date of Construction: 1813-20

Source: censuses, vital records, historic maps

Style/Form: Federal/two-story hipped block

Architect/Builder: unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: brick & stone

Wall/Trim: vinyl clapboard/wood

Roof: asphalt shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:
Garage, mid-20th c.

Major Alterations *(with dates)*:
Vinyl siding added

Condition: fair

Moved: no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

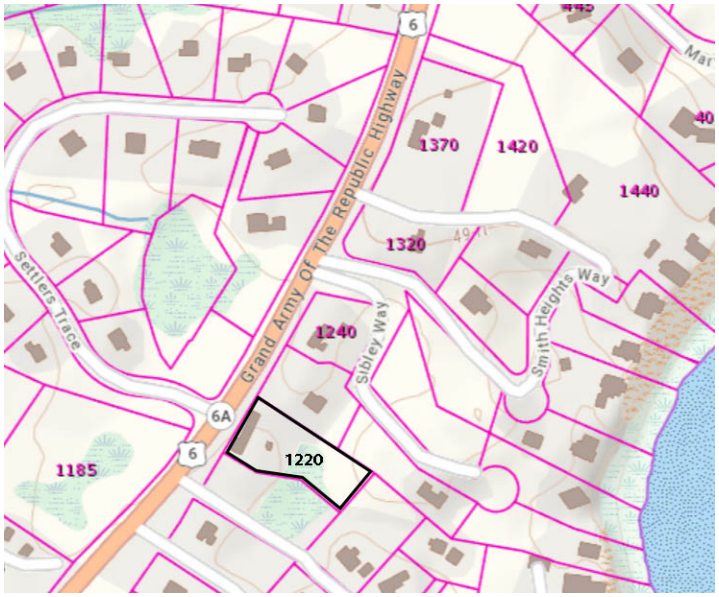
Acreage: 0.698

Setting: The house and associated buildings are situated on the State Highway amid dense roadside development comprised of historic properties and more recent summer cottages.

Photograph

View from SW.

Locus Map (north at top)



Source: Mass GIS Oliver Parcel Viewer

Recorded by: Kathryn Grover & Neil Larson
Larson Fisher Associates

Organization: Eastham Historical Commission

Date: June 2020

☐ Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The Freeman & Martha Knowles House, built ca. 1812, is a two-story wood frame single dwelling with a hipped roof and gabled kitchen wing. The front façade is unusually fenestrated and contains an unembellished central entrance (the exterior house has an overlay of vinyl siding) flanked by two windows on the north side and single windows on the south. It cannot be discerned if one or more windows have been lost to renovation. The south end wall contains three windows on each story with the two in the front spaced more closely indicating that the plan was a room and a half deep ad organized around a center chimney. A chimney pictured in the photo attached to the 1995 B Form is now gone. The story-and-a-half kitchen wing is attached to the north end of the house and set back from the front to expose one bay of windows on the exposed portion of the north end of the house.. It has a gable roof and a front façade containing four windows grouped in two pairs and an entrance tight to the wall of the house. The doorway has a shallow hood that may be what remains of a Federal-style cornice after the house was vinyl sided. The gap between the windows had been filled with a cooking hearth and chimney as indicated on the photograph attached to the 1995 B Form. A wood frame two-car garage with a gable roof is located a few feet north of the wing. The house and garage are sited very close to the highway frontage with small yards on the north, south and west with mature trees. A yard extends east from the rear of the house to woods and wetlands at the rear of the parcel.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Freeman Knowles (1779-1843), the son of William Knowles (1755-1830) and Rebecca Freeman (1757-1828) of Eastham, was living in this house at 1220 State Highway in 1820 with his wife Martha Mayo (1790-1851), daughter Temperance (1816-88), son Edmund F. (1819-89), and at least one other person. He was one of two men by that name in Eastham, the other born in 1778 and the son of Benjamin and Mary Brown Knowles, who one genealogist states inherited the "ancient house" of his father Edward Knowles (1713-99) by his father's will. Numerous deeds conveying land to Freeman Knowles exist before 1827, when the slightly older man died, and it is not possible to determine which man was the grantee. The Freeman Knowles of 1220 State Highway married Martha Mayo, the daughter of James and Abigail Mayo, in 1813, and the same family historian stated that this Freeman "is said to have built the flat-roofed house which stands a little north from the cemetery and is still in possession of his descendants." Censuses from 1820 to 1840 establish his presence in this South Eastham neighborhood, and though he was often and actively acquired land "on both sides of the Town Cove road, above and below the ancient cemetery," he may have built the house on his father's land at the time of his marriage.[1]

Freeman and Martha Mayo Knowles had six children—Temperance, Edmund F., Freeman (1821-1909), Hannah L. (1823-90), Josiah M. (1826-85), and William Freeman (born 1827). In 1843 Freeman Knowles "died outright" from an accidental fall, and in March 1850 his heirs deeded six acres with an orchard and peat swamp and two-thirds of the house and outbuildings to their brother Josiah M. for $475.[2] The other third of the house was their mother's share. The 1850 census lists Josiah M. Knowles with $1236 in real property in a household with his mother, his first wife Susan Snow, his brothers Edmund and William, both mariners, and the orphaned Wellfleet teenaged siblings Asa and Susan Stubbs. He owned forty-five acres, twenty of them improved, and the farm was valued at $300.

Martha Mayo Knowles died in January 1851, and Josiah's wife Susan died during or after childbirth in December of the same year. In July 1853 Josiah M. Knowles married Rebecca F. Knowles, his first cousin: she was the daughter of his uncle William Freeman Knowles (1801-64) and Betsy Doane (1806-88). In 1855 Josiah and Rebecca Knowles were listed alone in the household, and the 1858 Eastham map attaches "J. Knowles" to the 1220 State Highway house.

The 1860 census ascribes $1700 in real property to Josiah M. Knowles, and by then he and his second wife had three children—Herbert L., Susan Williams, and Edward Everett—born between 1855 and 1860. Rebecca Knowles died of pneumonia in 1862, and in 1864 Josiah M. Knowles married a third time, to Rebecca's younger sister Mary P. Knowles. The couple is

[1] Charles Thornton Libby, "The Knowles Family of Eastham, Mass.," *Genealogy of Mayflower Families from the New England Historical and Genealogical Register* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Col, 1985), 2: 475, 478-79.
[2] James and Hannah L. Rogers, Freeman and Joanna F. Knowles, Edmund F. Knowles, and William F. Knowles, to Josiah Knowles, 27 March 1850, BCD 89:525. Why the eldest child Temperance was not among the grantors is not clear; she married twice and died in 1888.

shown in the 1865 census with the three children. By 1880 all three children were adults and still in the household. Herbert and Edward were both fisherman, and Susan had married mariner Walter H. Dill earlier that year; he was a surfman and also a member of the household, but he died of consumption scarcely a year after the marriage.

Josiah M. Knowles died on 1 January 1885, and his April 1884 will left his widow half of his house, furniture, cash, notes, stocks, bonds, and insurance policy. The other half was left to son Edward E., who also received the outbuildings, land, part of a fish weir, and a marsh on Bishop's Island. Knowles specified in his will that "my daughter Susie W. Dill shall always have a home in the house as long as she remains single." In 1900 the widowed Mary P. Knowles was living in the house with just her step-daughter Susan Dill; son Edward E. is listed in the household just before theirs. In 1902 Eastham tax records, however, Mary P. Knowles is shown with no property, while Edward was taxed on the house, barn, store, outbuildings, eighteen hen houses and 332 chickens, a mill, and 45 acres in asparagus and other crops, woodland, cranberry bog, and peat swamp. The 1905 map attaches his name to 1220 State Highway.

Mary P. Knowles died in February 1909, and in 1910 the house was occupied by Susan Dill, then fifty-two years old, and the family of her brother Edward Everett Knowles (1860-1927). In 1895 he married Allice Linwood Wareham (1869-1952), who had grown up next door at 1240 State Highway (EAS.18), and by 1910 they had two daughters, Rebecca Alice and Della Linwood. Susan Dill died in January 1915, and in her will she left cash to her nieces Rebecca and Della Knowles and her nephew Arthur H. Knowles (son of her brother Herbert, who died in 1904) and three-quarters of the rest of her estate to her brother Edward. She set aside the remaining quarter in trust, to be administered by Edward, to benefit her brother Herbert's widow Carrie Baker Knowles.

By 1920 Edward E. Knowles, earlier a fisherman and farmer, had become a carpenter, and daughter Rebecca, then twenty years old, was a primary school teacher. She taught in Framingham and Brewster and later in Orleans, in both the junior high and high schools. Edward E. Knowles died in December 1927, and in 1929 the directory lists his widow Alice on King's Highway with daughters Della and Rebecca, then teaching in Chatham. Della married Paul C. Macomber of Marshfield in 1929, and in 1930 Alice Knowles and daughter Rebecca were the sole occupants of 1220 State Highway. In 1936 Rebecca, then thirty-one years old, married Howard B. Sherman, who lived in both Brewster and Washington, DC, and was nearly twice her age. The three are listed on Eastham's "absent household schedule" in the 1940 census. Howard Sherman died in the District of Columbia in May 1941, and Alice L. Knowles died in Eastham in 1952.

The 1220 State Highway property was owned by Rebecca Knowles Sherman and Della Knowles Macomber until 1993. Tax records for 1947 show the sisters with a house valued at $2500, a garage at $300, a camp at $200, and an acre house lot; they also owned five other undeveloped lots totaling about twenty-eight acres. In 1973 they subdivided the farm and placed the house, garage/barn, and shed on 1.343 acres. Della died in 1981. Rebecca Sherman divided the house lot in two in 1987, and she died two years later. In 1993 Della's children Elizabeth and Edward sold 1220 State Highway to Mary Allan, thus ending more than 170 years of Knowles family ownership.[3] The Allan family owned and occupied the house until 2003, when they sold it to Victoria Stoll of Santa Fe, New Mexico; Stoll sold it six years later to G. Gregory and Rachel A. Munroe of Temecula, California. In 2015 Rachel Munroe sold both lots to Creative Housing LLC of Provincetown, which was owner of record in 2020.[4]

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[3] Elizabeth M. Beanston and Edward H. Macomber to Mary Allen, 26 November 1993, BCD 8912:41.
[4] Mary Allan, 1220 Route 6, to Mary and Jeffrey W. Allan, 22 November 1994, BCD 9462:240; Mary and Jeffrey W. Allan to Jeffery W. and Elizabeth Allan, 21 April 1999, BCD 12219:213; Jeffrey W. and Elizabeth Allan, 1220 Route 6, to Victoria Stoll, Santa Fe NM, 14 August 2003, BCD 17465:255; Victoria Stoll, Dixon NM, to G. Gregory and Rachel A. Munroe, Temecula CA, 10 August 2009, BCD 23997:286; G. Gregory and Rachel A. Munroe to Rachel A. Munroe, 31 January 2012, BCD 26042:251; Rachel M. Munroe, 1220 State Highway, to Creative Housing LLC, Provincetown, 4 August 2015, BCD 29056:150. The house is depicted on a 1.343-acre lot on "Plan of Land in Eastham, Mass. As Surveyed and Prepared for Rebecca A. Sherman and Della L. Macomber," May 1973, BCP 270:91 and on Lot 1 of "Subdivision Plan Land in Eastham, Massachusetts Prepared for Rebecca Sherman, 8 April 1987, BCP 431:96.

Continuation sheet 2

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MAPS
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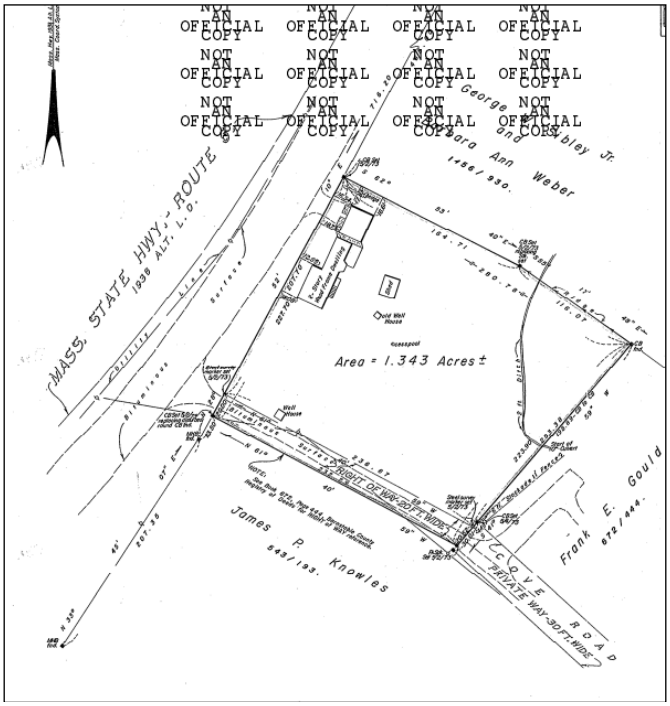
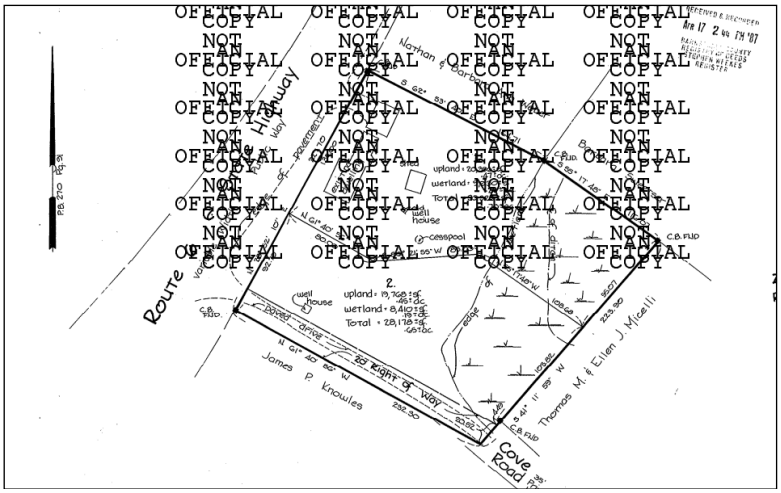
SUPPLEMENTAL IMAGES





The 1220 State Highway house is shown with its connected ell and garage on 1.343 on the 1973 plan at left (BCP 270:91) and on Lot 1 of the 1987 plan at right (BCP 431:96).

PHOTOGRAPHS

(credit Larson Fisher Associates, 2019 unless otherwise noted)

View from SW.

View from NW.